Book reviews

niques for nerve conduction measurement, written by three American specialists in rehabilitation medicine, has been expanded to include techniques for somatosensory evoked potential recording. It is aimed at physicians who perform electrodiagnostic tests and at practising electromyographers. The ringbound book is laid out in small sections, each of which describes for a particular nerve, electrode placements for stimulation and recording, amplifier settings and normal values. Each section is in fact an abstract from an original investigation, the reference to which is given. The authors are obsessive about temperature control and one of the initial sections of the book deals with the effects of temperature on nerve conduction measurements; equations are given which allow correction of measured values to a standard temperature. In their preface the authors state that they "present studies that use standardised distance and document skin temperature". However, in many of the techniques described, the original authors did not control temperature rigidly. The normal values quoted are therefore more appropriately used without recourse to a temperature correction.

The section on somatosensory evoked potentials contains general guidelines about scalp recording and stimulation of peripheral nerves, and in contrast to the initial sections, some comments on the clinical application of the various tests. Although these comments in general are useful and accurate, the suggestion that SEPs could be used to investigate peripheral nerve entrapment syndromes would surprise many neurologists and neurophysiologists.

Although the book will be of use as a reference source for uncommon nerve conduction studies and normal values, many neurophysiologists will prefer to consult the original articles. The remainder of the book may have a place for neurophysiologists in training, but there are more authoritative works for this purpose.

KR MILLS

Manter & Gatz's Essentials of Clinical Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology 7th ed. (Essentials of Medical Education Series). Edited by Sid Gilman, Sarah Winans Newman. (Pp 256; \$16.95.) Philadelphia: FA Davis. UK Distributors: Beckenham: Quest-Meridien, 1986.

This book gives a short account of the struc-

ture and function of the nervous system and in the preface the authors indicate that it is aimed at the "beginning student" wanting a brief overview of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology or the advanced student wishing to review the topic. The fact that it has gone to seven editions suggests that it fulfills these aims and has found an appropriate audience, and in my assessment of it I have particularly born in mind its potential audience. Two summers ago I spent a few months looking in detail at all the neuroanatomy and neurophysiology books available in an attempt to find a suitable text book that we could recommend to our undergraduate students. There are many such books, some large and some small, and I concluded then that an earlier edition of this book did not fulfil our needs. How then does the current edition rate and for whom is it suitable?

It begins with a traditional review of the anatomy and physiology of neurons and then follows with separate chapters on all the main components of the nervous system. Some of these, such as the section on the brain stem and cranial nerves, are very detailed and this seems to be the rule in many similar books. How many of us, as undergraduates, remember the chore of trying to learn brain stem sections yet none, I suspect, still remember the details. What we all needed as students, and indeed need now, is the equivalent of an idiot's guide to the brain stem rather than a detailed description as given here. On the other hand other sections of this book are rather brief. In common with many of its competitors this book has only a short section on the cerebral cortex and the description of the control of speech and language can only be described as sketchy. Other topics such as the reticular formation and the control of consciousness, and the control of eye movements, are similarly covered only very briefly. I could find virtually nothing on the important topic of the metabolism of neurons which is a serious omission though one shared by many similar books.

The best chapter is called chemical neuroanatomy and covers a topic often poorly dealt with in other text books. In it are described the main neurotransmitters, their major localisation in the nervous system, and a description of their physiological significance. This is an excellent review of a difficult topic and could be read with interest by both undergraduate and postgraduate. The illustrations are particularly good. Unfortunately, the following chapter on cerebrospinal fluid is less good and this could have been considerably improved by the inclusion of more line diagrams to illus-

trate, for example, the different types of hydrocephalus. The final chapter is on "neurologic diagnostic tests" and provides a review of the laboratory tests available for the investigation of the nervous system. In a book concerning the essentials of clinical neuroanatomy and neurophysiology this seemed to me to be totally unnecessary.

Overall the book is nicely presented, the line diagrams are clear, and it is easy to handle and of good quality paper. Whilst the contents list is detailed the index is very poor; obvious omissions are coma, memory, and cerebral dominance. In common with many small books attempting to summarise neuroanatomy and neuro-physiology this book has an uneven content and insufficient detail on some topics to make it suitable for recommendation to undergraduates as a primary text, and to be fair the authors do not claim this. I think it would be a useful book for a physician to have as a review of the nervous system and it certainly could be read with benefit by postgraduate students working for the membership of either the College of Physicians or College of Psychiatrists.

NEF CARLIDGE

The Clinical Process in Psychiatry. By Barry Nurcombe, Rollin M Gallagher. (Pp 774; \$69.50 H/bk; \$29.95 P/bk.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

There are those who argue that the art of psychiatry, the mesh and woof of clinical practice, cannot be taught but can only be learned, osmotically as it were, through repeated exposure to as wide a variety of clinical situations and challenges as possible. There are others who, despairing of the soft, intuitive, inconsistent quality of much psychiatric practice, insist that the whole process of diagnosis should be handed over to appropriately programmed computers.

The authors of this substantial text are well aware of this dilemma and indeed their justification for publishing their book (and these days massive tomes certainly demand justification) is that it will actually help students and practitioners to think. It starts with a somewhat abbreviated survey of biological and social functioning, proceeds with a review of the strategy and the tactics underpinning clinical reasoning, summarises the knowledge and the procedures required in routine clinical practice, describes how the general principles outlined can be applied to different clinical settings and con-

cludes with an account of research into the diagnostic process undertaken at the University of Vermont.

The authors deliberately interweave the solution to various clinical problems with the acquisition of basic knowledge and to an extent this does make for a more stimulating impact than is provided by more orthodox texts. But to ensure that the whole enterprise amounts to more than a disjointed if engaging read, such a book needs, to name but one crucial element, a first class index. Straightaway we encounter problems. Suicide is one of the clinical issues in psychiatry which does really divide the clinical sheep from the goats, and as such might be expected to figure rather prominently in such a book as this, but the index provides no entry and one has to jump backwards and forwards through the book to find any reference to it. No systematic assessment of the potentially suicidal patient is provided and similar omissions are to be found relating to the evaluation of the early phase of mania, the genetic role in disorders such as dementia and manic-depressive illness and the dilemmas faced by relatives trying to manage schizophrenic patients oscillating between the positive and negative phases of the disorder. Such neglect is all the more notable given the detail and care with which such issues as illness behaviour, the neural regulation of behaviour and the reliability of categorical diagnoses are considered.

The authors clearly hope that their approach will sharpen the vision of all those involved in education for clinical practice and no doubt their penchant for rather complicated flow-chart diagrams and dense multi-axial formulation reflects this earnest intention. It is doubtful, however, that any, other than the most conscientious and dedicated reader, will actually find this book any more conducive to thinking than the enormous, and sadly growing, compendium of available, equally massive if more orthodox textbooks of psychiatry.

AW CLARE

Intracranial Pressure VI. Edited by J Miller, GM Teasdale, JO Rowan, SL Galbraith, AD Mendelow. (Pp 798; DM 240.00.) Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1986.

This volume contains the 150 papers and the two short reviews presented at the ICP VI Conference in Glasgow in June 1985. This whole series is a most valuable source of

reference to the serious student of intracranial pressure but makes no concession to the novitiate. Inevitably, the book is indigestible.

Topics covered include the cause and consequences of traumatic intracranial hypertension, pressure volume relationships, resistance to CSF outflow, the autonomic and vascular causes of increased ICP, methods of measurement, pulse wave form analysis, the structural, functional and vascular consequences of raised ICP, hydrocephalus and CSF circulation, haemorrhage, ischaemia and other focal lesions, therapy and clinical uses of ICP monitoring.

Many of the papers presented at the ICP Conferences since 1972 have never appeared in fully refereed form and yet often contain novel ideas and much valuable information that has stood the test of time. Neurosurgeons are notoriously slow writers. ICP VI should be on the shelf of every medical library for consultation by the ever increasing spectrum of clinicians and scientists interested in problems of intracranial haemodynamics.

JD PICKARD

Tolerance to Beneficial and Adverse Effects of Antiepileptic Drugs. Edited by H-H Frey, W Froscher, WP Koella, H Meinardi. (Pp 192; \$36.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1986.

One of the more displeasing aspects of medical jargon is the tendency to borrow words from the vernacular and to pervert their meaning. The word "tolerance" is a good example. The OED defines this as "the power or capacity of enduring", the absolute reverse of the meaning of the word in the title of this volume. Furthermore, in the first chapter, WP Koella exposes what one always suspected, that even the medical uses of the word are ill-defined. He discusses the use of the terms cross tolerance, rebound tolerance, natural tolerance, acquired tolerance, negative tolerance, true negative tolerance (sic), metabolic tolerance and functional tolerance, and there appears to be much confusion. He concludes "... what we simply refer to as tolerance, by no means is a simple, and certainly not a monistic, phenomenon. In fact, a multitude of in part peripheral, in part central factors seem to contribute to the often more rapidly, often more slowly developing attenuation in real or apparent potency of a drug..." Tolerance

must certainly be a complicated issue, but surprisingly not much has been written about it, partly I suspect because of the difficulties in carefully studying the phenomenon. While definition and investigation may be difficult, patients seem to have no doubt of the importance of the issue, and physicians are commonly faced with patients who feel that the effects of an antiepileptic drug are wearing off. This book is a report of a workshop held in 1985, and whether it really adds much of worth to the literature is rather doubtful. It comprises 18 chapters, 11 of which report experimental work and seven clinical work. The overall standards are satisfactory, although some chapters are rather insubstantial and the more valuable contributions have all been published elsewhere. The volume will probably appeal only to those with a very particular interest in the subject, and while an epilepsy library might usefully contain a copy, I doubt whether its inclusion in a general neurology library would be justified. In the interests of economy, camera ready copy has been used, and the result is an untidy melange of typesetting which does the publisher no credit.

SIMON SHORR

Control of Human Voluntary Movement. John C Rothwell. (Pp 325; £35.00/£17.50 p/bk.) Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987.

In this useful book, the author begins by reviewing some relevant properties of muscles, sensory receptors and spinal reflexes; he then works up the nervous system with sections on ascending and descending pathways, cerebral cortex, cerebellum and basal ganglia. Postural control, eye-movement, and speech are not included. The treatment of each topic is brief, but the main points are presented clearly, and with ample references.

The author is a physiologist, and the emphasis is on the physiology of motor control; he brings together information from widely different sources. Thus, most sections include some anatomy, some information from animal experiments, and from experimental observations on human subjects. The brief descriptions of clinical conditions will help the non-clinical reader.

The book will be very useful for advanced students. Also, neurologists and neurophysiologists will find that the book brings together a lot of useful information, and